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SUBJECT: UNSCR 1373: NEW CTC CHAIRMAN SEEKS U.S. INPUT

SENSITIVE BUT UNCLASSIFIED

¶1. (SBU) BEGIN SUMMARY: At a January 29 meeting with newly appointed Counter-Terrorism Committee (CTC) Chairman, Panamanian PermRep Ricardo Arias, Ambassador Wolff and Ambassador Sanders offered U.S. views on the CTC's work and expressed support for Arias's leadership. END SUMMARY.

¶2. (SBU) Amb. Arias and his Security Council counterterrorism team requested a meeting to discuss plans for the CTC during his two-year term as its Chairman. Amb. Wolff expressed hopes that the CTC would build on its accomplishments and achieve better results in 2007, through a concrete, action-oriented effort to help states improve their implementation of resolution 1373. The CTC's uneasy relationship with the Counter-Terrorism Executive Directorate (CTED) had prevented it from achieving its full potential, he said. Despite the past shaky relationship between the CTED and the CTC, Wolff expressed confidence that CTED Executive Director Javier Ruperez and his team would foster a positive working relationship with Arias. Wolff then underscored that based on their mandates, the CTC is to provide guidance and supervision to CTED and not the other way around.

¶3. (SBU) Amb. Wolff also emphasized the need for the CTC and CTED to move from requesting and reviewing reports toward focusing on action-oriented work that will assist states in their implementation of 1373. Wolff identified a need for increased coordination with the Secretariat. He indicated that the work of the Secretariat's Counterterrorism Task Force, the CTC, and CTED must be aligned, particularly in view of efforts to implement the General Assembly's CT Strategy.

¶4. (SBU) Arias responded by inquiring about the U.S. relationship with CTED. Wolff said CTED had been responsive to U.S. concerns and cooperation is good. He noted that while CTED had some initial growing pains, due in part to the difficulties of putting together its staff, CTED now had staff members in place and is ready to begin working effectively and producing results. The recommendations in the comprehensive report the CTC prepared for the Council's second comprehensive review of CTED last December provide a good roadmap for the CTC and CTED's work in 2007, and this year will be a crucial one for the CTC and CTED because CTED's initial mandate will expire on December 31, 2007.

¶5. (SBU) Arias also inquired about reporting requests and CTC meetings. USUN said that there has been excessive emphasis on reports and papers. Instead of papers, it would be helpful for CTED to brief CTC members on matters of importance. The 15-member committee currently meets once a week, and Arias asked whether that may be too often. Wolff noted no objection to reducing the frequency of the meetings to meet work requirements. Our focus would remain on results, not process.

¶6. (SBU) Arias also sought views on what the CTC should focus on in its meetings. USUN replied that CTED's country visits are a valuable tool and the oral briefings CTED provides when it returns from those visits are useful for the CTC. It was also noted that CTC meetings would be more efficient if members have more time to review and digest the proposals CTED circulates. Because CTED often only gave CTC members two days before meetings to review documents, members were not always prepared for the discussion.

¶7. (SBU) Arias also asked about changing the countries that the CTC's three sub-committees consider to mirror more closely CTED's configuration into three clusters that cover different geographical regions. USUN noted that early in 2006, CTED had proposed changing the states considered by the sub-committees to align their work with CTED's, but that the CTC did not reach agreement. The UK and France, for example, had expressed concern that the restructuring could politicize the CTC's discussions because, rather than reviewing states from all different regions, the sub-committees would only consider states from the same region and thus might take a narrower perspective. Wolff asserted that the U.S. would be open to supporting such a restructuring if that would enhance CTC's effectiveness.

¶8. (SBU) Arias also sought U.S. views on coordination among the CTC, the 1267 Committee, and the 1540 Committee, particularly with respect to information sharing and visits to states. He remarked that some states still perceive a CTED visit as punitive. He suggested that this perception must be changed since CTED visits states to help them with their implementation of resolution 1373. Generally, Arias said the CTC should focus its energies on working to help states with the will but not the capacity to implement

resolution 1373. Wolff stressed that, even though the committees have different mandates, enhancing cooperation among the three bodies will help avoid duplication, ease the burden on states, and create positive synergies.  
WOLFF